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ABSTRACT

A family's metaphor, the frame of reference or perspective that is created and reflected through a family's use of figurative language, is a key to understanding the underlying values and realities of families. Constructivist theories of language view metaphor as essential to the creation of meaning. From this perspective, using metaphor as a means of investigating family communication is both justified and important. Of course, interpreting metaphor is difficult, requiring the consideration of a variety of contextual, linguistic, and cognitive factors. Interpretative discourse analysis of metaphor, which considers both linguistic components of conversation and the social actor's underlying meaning, allows researchers to explicate the mechanisms by which people conduct and understand interaction. In analysis of this sort, family members generate and interpret metaphors for the researcher. Because of the nature of a family's consensual reality, researchers may expect to discover strong relationships between the operative perspective or metaphor and the problem-solving processes used by a family. For instance, a family employing a "business" metaphor would rely on different problem-solving strategies than a family that considered itself a "school." (JL)

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ANALYSIS OF FAMILY METAPHOR:

METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

This paper presents a theory of metaphor as an indication of family ideology. Based upon constructivist views of metaphor, discourse analysis of metaphor is presented as a method of determining operative family frames of references. Discussion of contextual, interpersonal, and psychological factors in metaphor interpretation address the problems inherent in the evaluation of this methodology.

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ANALYSIS OF FAMILY METAPHOR: METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Only a short time ago Bochner (1976, p. 183) suggested that "metaphor is a fertile, and, as yet, unexplored aspect of interpersonal communication". He lamented the absence of a well-developed methodology for the analysis of metaphor in interpersonal contexts. That lamentation is still justified.

The complexity of metaphor as an object of analysis may explain the continued absence of the requested methodology. Theorists have attempted to explain the cognitive processes involved in interpreting metaphors, the role of metaphor as a component of the linguistic/semantic process, and the effect of metaphor in the construction of social realities. Throughout these and other investigations which have involved researchers in all the major social science disciplines, metaphor has remained an elusive but intriguing phenomenon of human language.

This paper does not attempt to solve the complexities of metaphor analysis. It does present and advocate the analysis of metaphor as a methodological component in the discovery and interpretation of the social reality of families. Research in family communication, specifically the examination of family themes or ideologies, is a promising area for the application of metaphor analysis.

The concept of a family theme or ideology connotes an

underlying value structure, a base upon which a family's goals and behaviors are predicated. Metaphor, as a linguistic phenomenon and a cognitive process, reveals the way people perceive their reality and organize their thoughts when integrating new information or reflecting upon existing information. As linguistic phenomena individual metaphors indicate these perceived realities and thereby suggest the operative value structures.

A family's metaphor may be defined as a frame of reference or a perspective which is created by and reflected through the use of figurative language; specifically, metaphorical utterances. The family metaphor is more idiosyncratic than the more general family themes discussed in previous studies of family ideologies. It may define subsets of broader categorizations of family types. For example, the family may conceive of itself as a team, an army, a corporation, a mission, a spaceship, etc. These metaphors connote general orientations such as cooperative versus competitive or internally versus externally focused behavior; yet they imply subtle though significant variations in the adoption of these general social perspectives. Whatever the chosen metaphor, the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of the family members are, in part, determined by this assessment of their relationship with each other and with the external environment.

This paper advocates the analysis of individual meta-

phorical utterances as indications of the general family metaphor or theme. A brief review of previous research concerning family ideologies, followed by a discussion of the nature of metaphor as a linguistic phenomenon, explicates the significance of metaphor as a key to understanding families' underlying values and realities. Interpretive discourse analysis of metaphor is presented as a means of identifying and interpreting individual metaphors in order to determine the basal operative family metaphor. Finally, the utility of metaphor analysis in family interaction research as a possible correlate or determinant of problem-solving behavior is discussed.

Research in Family Ideologies

Sociologists and clinicians have contributed the majority of research and insight in the area of family ideologies. Generally, observation of family interaction indicated that families enact idiosyncratic interaction patterns which may reflect their underlying value structures. Consequently, theorists assumed that the thematic nature of family interactions, while unique in many respects, might provide the basis for categorization of families into comprehensive typologies (Fitzpatrick and Best, 1979). Successful categorization would then supply a conceptual basis from which to examine the impact of sociological and psychological factors on different types of families.

Previously presented typologies have focused on identifying role behaviors in relationships, both within the family system and in the family's interaction with its external environment. In some cases researchers assessed the use of spatial metaphors as a means for categorizing families into specific types. For example, Kantor and Lehr (1975) developed a classification system based on spatial metaphors, concluding that a family's concepts of space, time, energy, affect, power, and meaning in large part determine the interaction and behavior of family members. Similarly, Henry (reported in Bochner, 1976) suggests the importance of spatial orientations as a critical factor in determining family interaction.

Other researchers, such as Reiss (1971) distinguished family types on the basis of their consensual reality of the external environment and the appropriate ways of interacting with the environment. This research suggests that family cohesion and the degree of detachment from the external system environment may be explored in terms of the values implicit in such relationships.Metaphor, as an indication of value structures, may contribute to future research focusing on the distinction presented by Reiss.

A more psychological emphasis is found in studies which examine marital relationship or intimate relationship typologies as determinants of relational success and satisfaction (Fitzpatrick and Best, 1979, Fitzpatrick and Winke, 1978). These studies suggest that the establishment and congruence of

relationship expectations impacts on the perceived adequacy of a relationship. Although not specifically concerned with interaction, this research supports an assumption underlying metaphor analysis, that images created and maintained through interaction determine perceived realities and individuals' reactions to reality contrasted with ideal expectations.

Implicit in these and other typologies is the realization that families interact using enduring patterns of behavior and that this behavior is congruent with the families' negotiated realities. Further efforts to understand family ideologies should address the content and patterns of communication within the familial context.

Although there are exceptions, little research has examined the actual verbal and nonverbal communication which reflects an existing family ideology. A notable exception is the work of Hess and Handel (1955). These researchers identified essential family processes necessary for the cultivation of congruent social images. These processes include establishing a congruence of images through an exchange of suitable testimony and evolving modes of interaction into central family concerns or themes. Their definition of the resultant theme indicates its importance (1955, p. 11):

> A family theme is a pattern of feelings, fantasies, and conventionalized understandings grouped about some locus of concern which has a particular form in the personalities of the individual members. The pattern comprises some fundamental view of realtiy.

Hess and Handel's (1955) explanation of a family theme may be equated with McLeod and Chaffee's (1972) notion of a frame of reference, that the family's frame is a perspective which is applied consistently and continually to a variety of contexts. The theme or frame is explicitly observable in the family's interaction. It creates an image of the family which dictates appropriate behaviors. The intensity of this image serves as a measure of the salience and pervasiveness of the values underlying the perspective (Boulding, 1962). An indication of the congruence of the image and the theme is the similarity of actual with expected behaviors.

Both Hess and Handel (1955) and McLeod and Chaffee (1972) point out the importance of communication structure and content as a reflection of existing themes. They suggest that researchers attend to the family's interaction to discover their themes and ideologies. Their direction is helpful, but it is nonetheless, vague. Further direction to specific communication content as the focus of analysis is needed. The theoretical explanation of metaphor as a persuasive tool in the creation of reality, as an indicator of value, and as a stimulus for intimacy justifies its consideration as the object of research. Understanding metaphorical utterances should enable researchers to identify and interpret individual metaphors as indications of the operating family metaphor.

The Nature of Metaphor

Although scholars throughout the ages have disagreed about the nature and utility of metaphor, there has been general agreement that metaphor involves a transfer of meaning (Ortony, 1975). Definitions of metaphor center on the apparent violation of linguistic compatability in a metaphoric utterance. Sapir (1977, p. 3) suggests that "metaphor states an equivalence between terms taken from separate semantic domains". Metaphor, taken literally, is nonsensical because the features of one metaphorical term are logically and linguistically incompatable with the features of the other metaphorical term (Thomas, 1969).

Theories of metaphor have been classified as constructivist or non-constructivist, closely paralleling the classical distinction between epihor and diaphor. Constructivist theories, which are relatively recent, view meaning as a creation of language and specifically of metaphorical language; while non-constructivist theories portray metaphor as an "unimportant parasitic variation of normal language usage" (Ortony, 1979, p. 2).

Constructivist theories include the works of rhetorical theorists such as Richards and Burke. Richards argues that by using metaphor we create new meanings from combinations of existing meanings. This process "describes a semantic whole which is separated from its constituents and whose definition is best conveyed by the stating of the metaphor

itself and by the sensing of its connotative reverberations" (Stephen, Allen, Burkett, Fraim, and Kirchner; 1980, p. 2). Black (1979) further fleshes out Richard's theory by detailing the cognitive processes necessary for a meaningful interpretation of a metaphorical statement.

Kenneth Burke defines metaphor as "a device for seeing something in terms of something else" (1969, p. 503). In this sense, metaphor, as perspective, acts as a perceptual filter which affects reality construction. Either implicit or explicit, metaphor forms the organizational base for every perspective (Crocker, 1977) as Pepper (1942) demonstrates in his discussion of the relationship between root metaphor and scientific paradigms. Metaphor as perspective is analagous to the conceptualization of metaphor as a frame of reference. Both explanations imply the power of metaphorical language as a construction of linguistically based reality (Whorf, 1941).

Metaphor, more so than literal language, is necessary for the development of consensual reality which suggests its importance in considerations of family ideologies. Bateson argues that we think in terms of relationships (Millar, 1980); hence, progressive thought and social adaptation requires relational language. Metaphor, as a cognitive process, allows us to expand or alter reality by transposing features of present reality on new territory, abstracting from both to create new meaning.

The linguistic construction of reality concomitantly establishes values and integrates them into the overall perspective. As Kohler states (1966, p. 38), "At the bottom of all human activities are values, the conviction that some things ought to be, and others ought not". Herein lies the essential connection; for, what "ought to be" can only be determined on the basis of what is perceived to be. Thus, values are interwoven with reality and both are a product of linguistic activity (Fernandez, 1977).

The values inherent in family ideologies are likewise based in and reflected by metaphorical expressions. The family metaphor acts as a perceptual filter (Mooij, 1976) and serves as an impetus for future thought and action (Thomas, 1969). For example, assume that a family perceives itself as an army. The distributive nature of this perspective may be revealed in the selection of conflict management and decision-making strategies. The family may therefore adhere to rigid rather than chaotic rule strcutures, and may rely on legitimate or coercive power rather than other power bases to resolve family disputes. One might logically expect a strong emphasis on discipline and authoritarianism and a de-emphasis of individuality and aesthetic concerns. In relation to their environment the family members may perceive themselves as "warring" with the larger social order and, as a result interpret external individuals and systems as adversaries. Congruent with the military perspective, the

family may select strategies to combat the effects of external elements and might evaluate the outcome of these encounters in terms of victory versus defeat. In this example, the army metaphor dictates the interaction of family members with each other and with those outside the family. It defines the appropriate behaviors for dealing with the internal and external environment and reinforces the values congruent with the metaphorical perspective.

Metaphor further cements family ideologies through its persuasive impact and its ability to generate intimacy. Metaphor is more effective than literal language in producing attitude change (Bowers and Osborn, 1966; and Reinsch, 1971) due to its ability to engage the active intellectual attention as well as the emotive responses of the listener (Crocker, 1977).

Osborn and Ehninger (1962) describe metaphorical qualifiers which affect the persuasive impact of the statement. Contextual qualifiers result from the situation implied in the context. For example referring to someone as a sheep in a pasture evokes a different response than referring to them as a sheep in a slaughterhouse. Communal qualifiers are the product of traditions or folkways, usually indigenous to a specific culture; while archetypal qualifiers, such as references to light and dark, assume experiences common to all humans. Private qualifiers are supplied by the decoder on the basis of subjective associations, they are truly creative

relational thought. Osborn and Ehninger (1962) conclude that metaphors which are contextually or communally qualified are more effective for disseminating information while those metaphors qualified archetypally or privately provoke profound emotional and intellectual experiences. Therefore, metaphorical utterances intended to influence emotions or attitudes, which are typical in the establishment of ideologies, may be more effective when they are archetypally or privately qualified.

In a novel discussion of metaphor, Cohen (1979) suggests that metaphor achieves intimacy. It draws the interactants closer by signaling a commonality of interest and purpose which excludes others. The issuance of an invitation into a private interpretation of reality, implicit in the use of metaphor, requires an extra-ordinary effort on the part of the listener. This linguistic exchange results in an awareness that a special relationship exists between the interactants. For example, in family interactions, metaphors may be understandable only by having previous knowledge of the experiences of the family. In this case a metaphor not only designates those "inside" the family but also reinforces the acceptance of the implied perspective by emphasizing the privileged nature of this relationship.

In sum, metaphor is significant as a basis of constructed reality and values; its efficiency as a persuasive tool and a creator of intimacy directs attention to metaphor as a

profitable resource in the investigation of family communication. Theoretically, the exposition of the metaphorical utterances in family interaction should permit the insightful interpretation of the family metaphor. However, the interpretation of individual metaphors and their effects on the overarching perspective is problematic.

The Interpretation of Metaphor

Several factors affect the ability of family members and researchers to interpret metaphor. These factors include the nature of metaphor as relational language, the contextual implications of interpretation, and the interpersonal or intrapersonal characteristics of the interpreter. Each factor creates difficulties in reliably and validly assessing the meaning of metaphor.

Metaphor, as non-literal verbal communication, is expressed in digital language; however, the import of the metaphor lies in the implied analogy (Bochner, 1978). Theorists suggest that digital communication, usually described as verbal, is interpreted literally, while analogic communication, usually described as nonverbal, stipulates relationships which are not literally decipherable. Rather than viewing analogic and digital communication as dichotomous, in the case of metaphor, they may be better considered as different ends of a continuum. Adopting this perspective may reduce the difficulty in accurately determining when a statement

should be interpreted literally rather than figuratively by de-emphasizing the importance of the mode of communication .

Further confusing the process of interpretation of metaphor is the acknowledged metaphorical basis of all literal language (Aarts and Calbert, 1979; Jordan and McLaughlin, 1976; and Wheelwright, 1962). When metaphorical interpretations become widely accepted, the metaphors are incorporated into the pool of literal language. At this stage the metahors have become stale, or dead. Some reseachers have suggested that the novelty or degree of figurative impact of a metaphor is determined by the shock that a reader-listener experiences when they confront the meaning of the metaphor (Osborn and Ehninger, 1962). Unfortunately for researchers, this method of identifying novel versus stale metaphors is not sufficiently detailed to allow for valid classification of the metaphor. The pervasiveness of metaphor in language is apparent in Lakoff and Johnson's (1981) discussion of spatial and temporal metaphors, and in Reddy's (1979) analysis of the use of conduit metaphors in references about thought, meaning, and language.

The difficulties in identifying and interpreting metaphorical utterances due to their subtlety is further demonstrated in the family process and therapy literature. Family clinicians have used the analysis of metaphor and metaphorical intervention in diagnosing and treating family pathologies. Haley (1968) presents examples of metaphorical intervention in reports of case studies explaining that the use of metaphor as therapy allows the family members to see the problem

in a different light and alter their behavior accordingly. However, this literature also illustrates the problems in identifying intentionally metaphorical utterances (Raitz, 1975), and in correctly interpreting the intended meaning of the metaphor (Haley, 1968). In some cases, family members may use metaphors unintentionally and/or subconsciously to discuss troublesome situations. These discussions stress the necessity of examining contextual exigencies when interpreting metaphor. The following discussion of context and its effects on interpretation indicate some factors that merit consideration.

The context of the interaction is critical for it restricts possible interpretations by invoking certain interpretive rules. The decision to interpret a statement literally rather than figuratively is derived from the context which signals whether or not the utterance has meaning within the literal sphere of reference (Boslego, 1980). The primary condition for the figurative interpretation of an utterance is the degree of contextual anomaly in the statement (Ortony, 1979; Davidson, 1979).

The context also infers the motivation of the speaker. In order to understand the reasons for making a particular statement, the researcher must understand the "relation of the semantic content of the trope to the interactional situation"(Crocker; 1977, p. 37). This interplay of context and the linguistic conceptualization has been regarded as

the central issue in the study of metaphor.

Interpretation of metaphor through the juxtaposition of statement and context assumes that the interpreter has adequate knowledge of "normal" language usage in that context. Colin Turbayne's theory of metaphor as " serious make-believe" indicates that figurative translations depend upon the decoder's knowledge of contextual information (Raitz, 1975). In essence, a person must develop a sense of metaphor from the context, much the same as he or she develops a sense of humor. The assessment of contextual impact is especially critical when analyzing novel metaphors.

Bochner (1978) directs researchers to consider two factors when interpreting metaphors with respect to a given context: 1) the interactional sequence itself, and 2) the influence of the social situation which includes environmental stimuli, interpersonal factors, and intrapersonal characteristics such as personality, cognitive schemata and cognitive competencies

Psycholinguistic studies report that the interactional sequence has a significant effect on the interpretation of metaphor. The exchange and form of messages influence the identification of metaphor by reinforcing ideas which are literally prominent (Jordan, 1972); and by establishing a pattern of interpretation which favors continued literal or figurative translation (Koen, 1965).

Sociological analyses demonstrate the necessity of examining meaning and impact of the total interchange with respect to the situation. For example, the ubiquity of metaphor in contextualized ritual demands different interpretation than the same or similar metaphors used in non-ritual interaction (Turner, 1974; Fernandez, 1977).

A primary component of family interaction is the emphasis on appropriate role behaviors. Family members assume or negotiate roles which carry with them tendencies to act and speak in "representative ways" (Swanson, 1975). A person's assumed role may directly influence their use of or interpretation of metaphor. The positive versus negative nature of the exchange may affect accuracy of message perception including perception of metaphor (Sillars and Scott, 1981).

Cognitive competencies and schemata determine the ways people process metaphorical statements. People vary in their ability to figuratively interpret language (Jordan, 1972) possibly as a result of physiological brain functions (Watzlawick, 1978). Cognitive schemata affect the associations of metaphor by controlling the transformation of the metaphorical utterance into implicit constituencies which in turn dictate the perceived meaning of the term (Frentz, 1974).

Cognitive competencies, especially the cognitive development of family members mediate the effect of metaphor. Developmental processes result in an increasing ability to decode metaphor as a person ages chronologically. Children have

great difficulty recognizing metaphors instead favoring literal interpretations (Billow, 1975). The capacity to understand metaphor lags well behind the development of ability to comprehend literal language (Gardner and Winner, 1979). Differential capacties to interpret or recognize metaphor demand that researchers not assume equivalent interpretations of a metaphor by all family members.

Interpretive Discourse Analysis of Metaphor

Research methodologies used to discover family themes are usually qualitative, consisting of interviews and projective techniques, however, some researchers have employed questionnaires or other psychometric techniques to analyze family types. These qualitative methodologies present problems in selecting reliable criteria for evaluating results and suffer from possible reduction bias which may invalidate the category system (Sohler, Holzberg, Fleck, Cornelison, Kay, and Lidz, 1957; Patton, 1980).

In light of the subjective nature of metaphor, researchers must be concerned with the representational validity of initial interpretation and subsequent categorization. Utilizing the interpretations of family members as a clarification tool helps to assure that the researcher's interpretations and reduction of data accurately reflect the meanings of the metaphors (Poole and Folger, 1981).

The identification of the family metaphor depends upon

the generation and analysis of individual metaphorical utterances by family members. Individual metaphors alone do not necessarily indicate the more general perspective. Rather, researchers may assess family interaction in terms of: 1) the prevalence of specific metaphors indicative of a perspective, 2) the degree to which all family members appear to understand and adopt the general metaphor, and 3) the congruence of family members' private and social behaviors with the perspective suggested by the individual metaphors.

Returning briefly to the example of the family "army" metaphor these concepts may be clarified. The prevalence and consistent use of metaphors which connote war, combat, or a military orientation may be assessed as an indication of the salience and pervasiveness of this frame of reference. Similarly, if these metaphors are generated by only one family member and are apparently ignored by other family members, the implied perspective may be an individual rather than a consensual reality. If the conflict management style or power based interaction of the family contradicts this metaphor, the perspective may be only temporary or non-consensual. In the instance of linguistic references to a military frame of reference coupled with evidence of participatory decision-making, an asbence of discipline, a detached or independent family structure, etc.; a researcher might correctly suspect the validity of the "army" metaphors as accurate exemplification of the family's theme.

Interpretive discourse analysis of metaphor allows researchers to explicate the mechanisms by which people conduct and understand interaction (Ellis, 1980). It considers the linguistic components of conversation and also the social actor's underlying meaning (Pilotta, 1980). Examples of interpretive discourse analysis of metaphor are presented in the works of Schön (1979) and Crocker (1977).

The analysis of metaphor in family interaction should address the pragmatic problems of context as discussed by Bochner (1978). In light of the proven influence of culture and social networks on family ideologies (Bott, 1971), the researcher should become familiar with the cultural background of the family. Additionally, this information will aid in recognition of normal language usage for the family in question. If researchers desire to establish typologies of family metaphors the selection of subject families should consider equivalence of demographic characteristics such as income, education, number and age of the children, family structure (nuclear versus extended), and religious affiliation (Haley, 1962).

The actual analysis requires the generation of metaphors by family members. Open-ended questions concerning family image, family goals and plans, sentence completion tasks, or projective techniques like the Thematic Apperception Test are useful. Involving all families members in the generation of data provides interpretation of metaphors from all rele-

vant individuals, and indicates the image makers of the family. Following the generation of metaphors the individual interpretations may be supplied in private interviews (Patton, 1980) to avoid forced consensus by the group.

Following the interpretation process the categorization of metaphor may begin. In many cases the reduction of individual metaphors into identifiable perspectives will require arbitrary decisions on the part of the researcher. If the guidelines for ensuring representational validity are used, the degree of subjectivity is minimized (Poole and Folger, 1981).

Overall this methodology is admittedly untested and exploratory. However, assuming its validity, it may be able to distinguish factors contributing to inaccurate perceptions of other family members, their roles, and/or conflict escalation within the family. It provides a means of further understanding more general family ideologies, and thus of examining the effects of these subtleties on family interaction. One relevant area of family communication research, problem-solving behavior, may especially benefit from the use of interpretive discourse analysis of metaphor and the resultant knowledge of family metaphor as perspective.

The Impact of Family Metaphor on Problem-Solving

Relationship definitions and ideologies are an extremely important determinant of the communication patterns within relationships (Fitzpatrick and Winke, 1978). Consequently, one would expect a family metaphor or more generally a

family ideology to affect interaction and to produce expectations of future interaction. The problem-solving process, as a specialized form of interaction, involves the utilization of power components that are integrally related to the negotiated roles of family members. Due to the influence of consensual reality in role definitions, researchers may expect to discover strong relationships between the operative perspective or metaphor and the problem-solving processes used by a family. This discussion argues that the identification of a family metaphor may reveal subtle distinctions between ideologically similar families with respect to their problem solving activity. Pragmatically, the effort to identify a family metaphor may provide a supplementary method of predicting and explaining the power-based processes of problem solving in family systems.

Previous research in family ideologies indicates that the structure of the family, as a result of value-based ideologies, affects the family's problem-solving competence and the selection of problem-solving strategies. In dyadic relationship research, Fitzpatrick and Best (1979) categorized couples as Independent, Separate, or Traditional. They determined that a couple's relationship definition was strongly related to their methods of problem solving. For example, "Independent" couples, characterized by a negotiated autonomy, share problems and conflict resolution. "Separates" are more detached and consequently share little with each other as typified by their active avoidance of conflict. Operating with little

autonomy and adhering to traditional values, "Traditional" couples engage rather than avoid conflict as a necessary joint activity guided by traditional role expectations. The couples define their role relationships based on values which provide expectations for handling conflict. The level of definitional consensus affects their relational satisfaction by clarifying expectations for appropriate conflict management behavior (Fitzpatrick and Winke, 1978; Rausch, Barry, Hertel, and Swain, 1974).

Focusing on the family as a group rather than dyads within a family system, researchers have demonstrated the importance of a family's consensual reality on problem-solving behavior (Wieting and McLaren, 1979). In the assessment of problem-solving competencies Reiss (1971) revealed that a family's orientation to their environment affected problem-solving abilities. Environmentally senistive families were more competent than internal-distance sensitive or consensus sensitive families. Similarly, the pluralistic family described by McLeod and Chaffee (1972) stresses the need for sensitivity to the environment and the development of individual family member's opinions on critical issues to prepare them for conflict management.

A typology of sixteen family types based on two dimensions, cohesion and adaptability, presented by Olson et al (1979) emphasizes the importance of power based interaction as a criteria for classification of family types.

The "healthy" or non-pathological family is able to achieve a balance between the extremes of enmeshment and detachment, and between the extremely rigid and extremely chaotic rule structures observed in clinical families (Olson, Sprenkle, Russell and Swain, 1979). Essentially, the families orientation to the use of power and authority is a result of their consensual reality, and in turn affects their ability to cope with the natural changes experienced by a developing family.

As this research suggests, family ideology effects the ability of individuals within the family as well as the family system itself to solve the major and minor problems they confront on a daily basis. However, these typologies are necessarily general. A family type may include a variety of more subtle, yet identifiable, family perspectives. The search for these subtleties and their effects on family interaction may be an appropriate application of the middle range theory of family metaphor. More specifically, the remaining discussion assesses family metaphor as a guide to expected problem-solving behavior and as a means of understanding the motivations for this behavior.

In an insightful discussion of the unique properties of family problem solving, Weick (1971, p. 13) suggests that "the ways in which we study family problem-solving are influenced by the metaphor which we think is accurate in characterizing this activity". Consequently, the perspective created and sustained by the family metaphor could influence the family's selection of appropriate problem-

solving strategies. Moreover, the properties of the family as a problem-solving group, i.e. the effects of family structure on the utilization of power, the general inequality of family members' access to relevant information, the role of family problem solving as expressive behavior, and the involuntary nature of family membership, suggest that investigations of problem-solving as a family activity should be rooted in a thorough knowledge of the family's reality.

Weick's (1971) analysis of the family as a problem-solving group, as well as the sociological literature concerning power in families, suggests at least three domains which might be investigated with regard to the effects of a family metaphor on problem-solving behavior. Specifically, attention should be given to: 1) the bases of family power, in other words, the different types of power used in family interaction;(Classifications of power bases such as French and Raven's (1959) discussion of legitimate, coercive, expert, referent, and reward power exemplify this domain) 2)the family power process which involves the actual verbal and nonverbal interaction (.relevant variables may include assertiveness, control, and dominance behaviors); and 3) the family power outcomes, or who makes the ultimate decisions (Olson and Cronwell, 1975; Sprey, 1975). The family metaphor should be reflected in each of these domains, and the congruence of actual and expected behaviors may indicate the strength of the reality inferred in the metaphor.

In addition, knowledge of the family metaphor may

suggest the motivations for certain types of problem-solving behavior. Existing typologies provide insight into the general goals of the family types. Metaphor analysis would provide a more intimate knowledge of the family's reality and the contextual exigencies which produce the need for certain types of behavior.

In order to clarify the preceeding claims, consider the following example. Assume that two families that are fairly equivalent in terms of demographic characteristics, are classified as environmentally sensitive and pluralistic families using some of the presented ideology types. These families would be externally focused, sensitive to environmental cues, more concerned with issue orientation than maintenance of harmony within the family, yet, interdependent and therefore fairly cohesive. However, one family perceives itself as a business, while the other family perceives itself as an educational institution. The differences in perspective would probably affect the problem-solving process in the following ways.

These families would probably use different power bases. The "business" might rely on legitmate or reward power while the "school" would rely on expert power. The bases of power may determine the process of interaction including the degree and type of assertiveness, dissent, and dominance present in the conversation. One would expect the"school" to be more tolerant of, or even promote, assertiveness or dissension

among family members, while the "business" would probably tolerate such activity to a much lesser degree. Ultimately, the outcome of the problem-solving activity of the "business" family would depend upon the desires of the "top management" in this case, the parents. However, depending upon the nature and severity of the problem, the expert on the issue would have a better chance of controlling the outcome regardless of their formal status in the family in the case of the "school" operative metaphor.

Not only does the family metaphor suggest tangible differences in problem-solving processes, it also implies the motivations of the family's selection of these processes. Assuming that the "business" is motivated by utilitarian drives, the selected strategy would be based on perceptions of its expediency and efficiency in bettering the overall cost/benefit position of the family. On the other hand, the "school" might be motivated by a desire to improve the social and/or personal education of the family members. Therefore, this family's problem solving behavior would reflect their values of participation, issue confrontation, and intellectual development. The knowledge of the motivation for employing specific problem solving behaviors may become critical in instances where behavior modification is desired. This knowledge would help determine the most effective means of altering behavior by allowing the new behaviors to be congruent with the underlying motivations of the family.

In short, the identification of a family metaphor through

interpretive discourse analysis of individual metaphors provides family communication researchers with a means to better understand the consensual realities of families being studied and therefore enhances the knowledge of the family's interaction. As a supplementary methodology it contributes to the ongoing research of family ideologies and the subsequent family process.

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